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## Press Release on the Preliminary results of the 2014-2015 Cropping Season in the Sahel and West Africa.

The **2014-2015 cropping campaign** was characterized by a late onset. Despite a better spatial and temporal rainfall distribution in August and September, the significant rainfall deficit persisted in the Western part of the Sahel (Cap Verde, Mauritania, Senegal, the Gambia and Guinea Bissau) and some areas of Mali, Niger and Chad. In those areas, a number of reseeded cases have been reported as well as plot abandonment especially in the Gambia and Guinea Bissau. On the hydrological field, the flows were low in May and June but normalized in July August and September following the rainfall. However, flood levels are below average in flooding rice-growing areas on the Niger and Senegal Rivers. That could have negative impacts on the dry season crops. The phytosanitary situation is globally calm. However, seed-eating birds caused serious damages on cereals in the areas of Soum and Sourou in Burkina Faso.

**Concerning the pastoral situation**, after a continued hunger gap, the re-establishment of rains in July permitted an improvement of rangelands and flooding levels of water points at the end of the rainy season. Nevertheless, an early transhumance was mentioned in Mauritania, Senegal, Benin and Chad. In perspective the insecurity in the Northern part of Mali and North-East of Nigeria and Central Africa Republic represent a risk that could disturb the usual transhumance.

**Concerning the Regional Crop production**, the forecasted figures don't include Mali and Niger. The total forecasted cereal production is 48 510 000 tonnes. It is 4 % higher compared to the one of the previous year and 8% higher compared to the average of the previous 5 years. This production level hides, however, disparities from one country to another. Significant decrease of more than 32% is recorded in the Western Sahel countries and an increase of more than 9% in the coastal countries. Compared to the average of the previous 5 years, rice production (14 809 000 tonnes) and maize (18 094 000 tonnes) experienced respectively 25% and 12% increase. Nevertheless, Millet production (3 891 806 tonnes) experienced a decrease of 29%. Groundnut production (5 818 620 tonnes), cassava (84 086 000 tonnes), yam (63 463 000 tonnes) and taro (4 840 000 tonnes) experienced respectively increase of 5%, 7%, 20%, and 92%. The Cowpea production (3 652 584 tonnes) is stable (-1%).

**The Market situation** is characterized by a significant decrease of FAO indices on prices of food products namely those of Cereal since June due to good perspectives at worldwide tender level of cereal and good stock level. However, the wheat price and secondary cereal have slightly risen in October due to late cropping in the US for the maize and to the degradation of perspectives in Australia for the wheat. At regional level, the Market situation is characterized by a good level of market supply and a relative stability of main cereal prices. This is due to the important level of traders and producers stocks in the Central<sup>1</sup> Basin, to the globally average to good level of production in the main Basins (Centre and East) and to the good price difference between importing and exporting countries. That contributed to maintain the cross-border flows (Eastern Basin). However, prices remain

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<sup>1</sup> Eastern Basin : Benin, Niger, Nigeria, Chad and Cameroon ; Central Basin : Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali and Togo ; Western Basin : Mauritania, Senegal, the Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia

high at the level of western trade basin and on some Niger, Chad and Mali markets. This could reduce access capacities to food of poor and very poor households which depend on the market. However, the closure of the borders due to the Ebola outbreak reduced the cross-border flows and Market frequentation in the Western Basin. This caused the decrease of rural and urban population income in affected countries as well as the bordering areas of the neighbouring countries. Livestock prices on the market increased of at least 15% compared to the average of the previous 5 years, but decreased compared to the previous year.

**The nutrition situation** remains alarming namely in the Sahel. In fact the results of the June-July and August-September 2014-2015 survey showed a global acute malnutrition level above the warning threshold (10%) in 26 areas or regions distributed in Mauritania Senegal, Mali, Niger and in Chad and a level above the emergency threshold (15%) in 6 localities in Mauritania, Senegal, Niger and Chad. In Nigeria and Chad, the January 2014 nutrition Survey conducted was showing 3 States above the alarming threshold and 3 other above the emergency threshold. Nevertheless, according to UNICEF, 890 000 children under 5 years were victim of severe acute malnutrition from January to October 2014.

**The analysis of the food and nutrition** situation reveals that no area is observed in an emergency or in a state of famine according to the classification of the “Cadre Harmonisé”. However, between October and December 2014, 10 areas where in a situation of food and nutritional crisis in The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Senegal and Chad. In the overall countries analyzed, 3 026 000 people are in crisis or emergency and especially in The Gambia, Guinea Bissau, Senegal and Chad. Between January and March 2015, due to the early depletion of stocks, higher localized food prices, the deterioration of trade terms and the erosion of livelihoods of poor and very poor households, the food and nutrition crisis could reach nearly 4,208,000 people in 27 areas in Burkina Faso, Gambia, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Chad.

Between October and December 2014, a total of 153 areas or regions involving 14 530 000 people are in food insecurity under pressure (phase 2). This food insecurity level could affect 15 900 000 people distributed in 172 areas or regions between January and March 2015. In most cases, phase 2 (under pressure) food insecurity is due to the combined impact of structural factors (in particular the strong population growth, poverty, chronic malnutrition), crop failures, civil insecurity, and the high level of food prices. These people under pressure need actions to strengthen their resilience and/or rehabilitation to prevent an excessive deterioration of their livelihoods and their failover to crisis situation. To this is added 3 200 000 population displaced and refugees in late October 2014 against 1 200 000 in January 2014 according to OCHA. These figures of the “Cadre Harmonisé” do not take into account Cote d’Ivoire, Nigeria and countries affected by the Ebola outbreak (Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone).

In the countries affected by the Ebola Outbreak, preliminary information showed a decrease of agricultural production and demand, disruption of the functioning of markets, a deterioration of livelihoods, a decline in the purchasing power of households, a risk of degradation of the nutrition situation due to access difficulties to food in sufficient quantity and quality and to the basic social services.

Given the analysis above, the meeting recommends:

**With regards to the governments:**

- Quickly develop assistance plan to populations in food and nutrition insecurity;
- Assess the intervention in order to improve the targeting tools and the efficiency of the interventions.
- Pursue resilience strengthening actions of poor populations in areas under pressure, namely, by implementing country resilience plans ;
- Strengthen the monitoring, prevention and the malnutrition care while acting on its structural causes;
- Provide adequate and harmonized responds to assist and rehabilitate areas affected by the Ebola outbreak;
- Take the necessary preparatory measures to better anticipate the impact of the spread of the epidemic on food and nutrition security;
- Take measure to facilitate the cross-border transhumance and crop product flows
- Accelerate the training of national structures in charge of the implementation of the Cadre Harmonisé;
- Take measures to ensure the financial sustainability of national information systems and cross-border flows monitoring ;
- Disseminate at large scale the results of rainfall and hydrological seasonal forecasts toward producers to enable them to better plan their farming activities and strengthen their resilience to hydro meteorological shocks;
- Strengthen the capacity of national information systems on fishery, horticulture and livestock in order to establish namely complete food balance sheet.

**With regard to the regional information systems**

- Take concerted measures to monitor and assess the impact of the Ebola outbreak in the affected countries and in the regions;
- Strengthen the monitoring of the pastoral and market situations.

**With Regard to UEMOA and ECOWAS**

- Support national information systems specifically in countries affected by Ebola;
- Ensure coherence between the different initiatives / tools developed in the region as well as the responds.
- Support countries in the prevention, care of the Ebola patients and strengthening livelihoods of affected households.

**Solidarity address with regards to countries affected by the Ebola outbreak.**

The meeting, solidarity to the people in countries affected by the Ebola Outbreak, is calling all countries, Regional organizations, Technical and Financial partners to support all on-going efforts to eradicate epidemic and reduce impacts on household food and nutrition security.

DAKAR, November 20<sup>th</sup> 2014